

Please cancel claims 11, 20, and 21.

REMARKS

Claims 11, 12, 20, and 21 were pending in the present application prior to entry of this amendment. By this amendment, claim 12 has been amended; claims 11, 20, and 21 have been canceled without prejudice; and claim 22 has been added. In view of the above amendments—which are believed to be in conformance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116—and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that claims 12 and 22 are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants first note with appreciation the Examiner's withdrawal of the finality of the Office Action dated December 11, 2000. Applicants also acknowledge with gratitude the Examiner's determination that claim 21 includes allowable subject matter.

Claims 11 to 12 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,997,502 ("Reilly et al."). This rejection is now moot with regard to canceled claims 11 and 20. As to claim 12, this claim has now been amended to depend from new claim 22. As explained below, claim 22 sets forth the features of now canceled claim 21 including limitations of claims 11 and 20. As indicated by the Examiner, claim 21 included allowable subject matter. Applicants therefore respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner has indicated that "[c]laim 21 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." Applicants have added claim 22 which sets forth claim 21 in independent form including the limitations of base and intervening claims 11 and 20. It is noted that the reference to a "dialysis machine" has been removed. It is believed that claim 22 is allowable for the reason indicated by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request acknowledgment of the same.

It is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims are in condition for

allowance, and prompt notification thereof is requested. If for any reason the Examiner believes that contact with Applicants' attorney would advance prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

12. (Twice Amended) The connector as recited in claim [11] 22 wherein the bar code extends circumferentially around the identifier.

Claim 22 has been added.

Claims 11, 20, and 21 have been canceled without prejudice.